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LETTER 3 FEBRUARY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been progressing, slowly and grudgingly, but at least in most instances, forward. The process still requires intense care and encouragement and, unfortunately, there are frequent attempts to derail the Dayton/Paris Accords. It is as a signatory of the Dayton/Paris Accords, and as the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, that I bring to your attention one particularly troubling event that the High Representative's office termed publicly as "obviously a clear violation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, its humanitarian annex specifically".

I would recommend that for the full details of the event, the transcript of the joint press conference of the United Nations and the Office of the High Representative of 27 January 1997 at Sarajevo be reviewed. However, to summarize: While a group of refugees, presumably mostly Bosniaks, were repairing their homes and returning to their place of origin within the Republika Srpska, an entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, they were attacked by an organized mob at several points and from several directions. To quote the Stabilization Force (SFOR) spokesperson:

> "It is the opinion of Commander SFOR, General Crouch, that the two most disturbing events that were witnessed by SFOR personnel are: the mobs were clearly organized with the violent intent to prevent the authorized and accepted return process of Muslim civilians to their pre-war location and, secondly, the obvious and blatant inaction of the Republika Srpska police that were present to even attempt to stop the Republika Srpska civilian mob from committing the criminal assaults on the Muslim settlers. General Crouch is outraged by both of these issues and strongly condemns the relevant Republika Srpska authorities for allowing this despicable act to take place when they themselves had indicated that they accepted this very resettlement plan in Gajevi."

The United Nations spokesperson, Alexander Ivanko, added:

> "In view of the United Nations mission, it is completely unacceptable that a group of vigilantes were allowed, by the Republika Srpska local

authorities, to attack Bosniak refugees and destroy their property. The United Nations is especially dismayed by the fact that the Republika Srpska police did not interfere to stop the violence. Last week the local police in Koraj, and the International Police Task Force (IPTF) had agreed they would commence joint patrols, but once all the agreements were made, the Republika Srpska failed to appear when scheduled for those patrols. Yesterday, the chief of police in Koraj, made himself unavailable when IPTF sought his assistance in responding to the violence. The chief of the public security centre, Mr. Bilosevic absented himself in Doboj for the day. When finally contacted by telephone, he refused to take any action. Such behaviour by the Republika Srpska police officials can only be described as abysmal."

Excellency, the objective is not to bring the Council's attention to every incident that may go against the peace process. Unfortunately, even according to the views emanating from the United Nations and High Representative's Office in Sarajevo, these are not isolated incidents, but in fact systematic attempts to prevent the return of any refugees and the implementation of the most critical elements of the Dayton/Paris Agreement. More disturbingly, these attempts have been very successful, with an almost absolute blockage of refugee returns.

If refugees and displaced persons cannot return freely and in safety, the peace process cannot survive. This is the heart of a lasting peace as well as being critical to those countries anxious to see Bosnian refugees returning.

May we suggest that, in consultation with the Secretary-General, the Council consider further measures to enhance the efforts of IPTF in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, two, that the Council emphasize its resoluteness to confront these violations of the Dayton/Paris Accords and enable the voluntary and prescribed return of refugees.

Excellency, these provisions should apply to all Bosnians regardless of ethnicity. Likewise, all political, military or police authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina violating the Dayton/Paris Accords, international law and basic human rights must be held accountable and confronted by those responsible for implementation.

May I ask for your kind assistance in circulating the present letter as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Muhamed SACIRBEY